THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir. As per the information received from the State Government, five lions in Gir Forests in Gujarat have been killed recently due to electrocution caused by electrified wire fencing put up by the villagers.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The State Government has investigated the matter. Following the investigation, four persons have been arrested and sent to judicial custody. To ensure non-recurrence of such cases, the State Government has taken the following steps:

(1) The peripheral region of Gir and other habitats of lion have been scanned for illegal electric fencing.

(2) Patrolling in the peripheral region has been intensified.

(3) Paschim Gujarat Vij Supply Company has been requested to guard against such illegal use of power and illegal electrified fencing.

(4) Awareness campaign has been intensified in the region to sensitize villagers against wildlife crime.

Illegal cutting of Trees

451. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the business of illegal felling of trees is thriving in the entire country;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to take any stringent actions to stop this;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No such report that the business of illegal felling of trees is thriving in the entire country has been received. However incidences of illegal felling of trees do take place and the action is taken against the offenders by respective State/UT Governments as per the existing Acts/Rules.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Genetically engineered crops

452. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of genetically engineered crops approved by the GEAC for the field testing and such crops approved for commercial cultivation;

(b) the crop-wise, area-wise and State-wise details of the GE crops; and

(c) the procedure for approving a GE crop for commercial cultivation after field testing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Bt cotton is the only genetically engineered

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

crop approved by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) for commercial cultivation in nine cotton growing States namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The total area under Bt cotton cultivation is approximately 128,44,000 acres. The GEAC has also approved the field testing of Bt rice, Bt okra, Bt bringal, Bt tomato, Bt potato, Bt groundnut and Bt cotton expressing new gene events of which field trials of Bt rice, Bt okra, Bt brinal and Bt cotton have been initiated. The states where field trials of GM crops have been undertaken include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharasthra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(c) Extensive Rules and guidelines have been framed for evaluating the environmental and health safety aspects of genetically modified crops. The GEAC also takes into consideration the results of the biosafety data, findings of the field trials as well as recommendations of the Monitoring cum Evaluation Committee (MEC) constituted by the Government for evaluating the field trials of GM crops and recommendations of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) before approving the GM crop for commercial cultivation. Only those transgenic crops which are found to be safe for human consumption as well as the environment are approved for commercial release.

Study of sea behaviour

453. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Central team has visited Orissa coastal region to study the sea behaviour *i.e.* its advancement towards the land along the Puri coast etc.;

(b) whether the sea has washed away some newly built roads along the Marine Drive posing serious threat to a number of new hotels and apartments coming up along the coast; and

(c) if so, the details of the study so conducted *inter-alia* indicating the action plan of Government to address this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on Table of the House.

Contamination of water in Mettur, Tamil Nadu

454. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that agriculture lands in Tamil Nadu particularly around River Cauvery region are losing its fertility due to a private chemical company, of which hazardous chemicals residue begin mixed with river water near Mettur;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are also aware that a number of people are being affected by unknown diseases due to contaminated water in Mettur area in Tamil Nadu;

(d) whether Government have received any representation regarding such problems requesting to take necessary action; and

(e) if so, the action taken thereon?